

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# All the Year Round

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## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WINNE," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XXX.

THERE could be no doubt about it; while Phil was away, enjoying his Christmas holidays, Ellinor had been in a perennial state of ill-temper, though Lucy, who could not see a fault in those she loved, would not admit the fact even to herself, and pleaded all sorts of plausible excuses for her benefactress. Among these were the dreariness of the house in Grafton Street; the fussiness of the ancient Sir Peter and his wrinkled wife; the prevalence of the east wind; the sharp attack of influenza Ellinor had had to endure—any and every cause, in fact, except the right ones, of which she was as ignorant as though she lived in another planet, and could only catch sight of Ellinor's orb, when the moon was at its full, through a powerful telescope.

The causes of Ellinor's ill-temper are easily told. They were two-fold. Cause number one was a visit from Uncle Hugh, in which he fussed and fumed a great deal, asked her if she had yet consulted a London doctor, expressed his willingness to escort her to a man in whom he had the very greatest confidence, arched his brows at her when she flatly refused to be so escorted, as there was another "lung-man" she infinitely preferred to the one he had named, and whose address had been given her, but, unfortunately, had been mislaid.

Uncle Hugh was more "put out" with his beautiful niece at this interview than he had ever been before. He went away that morning, saying it was high time she joined her mother at Mentone, and—he did not leave his customary cheque behind him.

Ellinor condensed a report of this interview for Lucy's benefit into a single paragraph, thus:

"Poor old Uncle Hugh is afraid I shall get a chronic red nose if this cold hangs about me so long. He actually wants me to see a doctor. I suppose I shall have to humour him."

She did not think it necessary to mention the fact, that the consultation of a physician had been the whole and sole pretext for her visit to London at this unseasonable time of year.

Cause number two was an irritating item of news which came to her in round-about fashion from Stanham. Since Ellinor's visit to the Fairfaxes, her maid Mélanie had kept up an intermittent correspondence with the housekeeper at the Hall. From that worthy had come tidings of Lord Winterdowne's flattering attentions to Miss Edie, coupled with the assurance that there could be little doubt but what the young lady might become Lady Winterdowne, of Winterdowne Castle, if she chose to throw over Mr. Wickham, as people at Stanham were inclined to think she would.

This news was in due course communicated to Ellinor during one of her elaborate toilettes.

"Taisez vous, vous babillez comme une fille de village," was all the acknowledgment poor little Mélanie had for bringing to her mistress what she imagined could not fail to be an interesting item of gossip. She did not know—nor did anyone else in the house—that, for twenty-four hours after, little Edie in the Winterdowne diamonds was the one vision that filled Ellinor's thoughts. Poor Esau's state of mind when he railed at his brother and called him a supplanter, was mild compared with Ellinor's during that twenty-four hours.

"These two times—these two times she

has supplanted me," in effect she kept saying to herself all day long; "without an effort this little country girl wins the love of a man who has nothing but indifference or scorn for others far more beautiful and distinguished than she; and then when that love seems slipping away from her, secures for herself the offer of wealth and position far beyond what she is entitled to in common-sense and reason."

Ellinor's thoughts grew very bitter against Edie just then. She translated them, however, into a phraseology which might have been dictated by the purest Christian charity to Lucy one afternoon, as they sat chatting together over the drawing-room fire.

"I have heard of my little cousin at Stanham," she said; "she is leading on another man now just as she has led poor Mr. Wickham for the last two years, in fact ever since she has been out of short frocks." Then she paused a minute and added in a thoughtful tone, as though the idea had just come to her: "It's a thousand pities she hasn't a mother, or some kind, sober-minded friend, who could tell her the mischief she may bring about with her heedless flirtations."

Then, having set Lucy's brain working in the direction she wished, she set her own going on a series of possibilities, probabilities, and practicabilities, having for their issue the solution of the question: "Why must I marry the man I love—this man, Phil Wickham, whom I have so nearly brought to my feet? Why may I not do as some half-dozen girls I know have done already—marry the man who can give the diamonds and the dresses, the horses, the town and country houses, and befool, and hoodwink, and blind him and 'society' at large, and keep my heart free all the time for the man not so favoured by fortune and who has little more than passion to offer for passion."

It was in effect going over once more the ground she had gone over, as she had thought, finally at Stanham; with this difference. Then the question to be answered had been, "Which of these two lots in life shall I keep, which let go?" Now it was, "Why may I not keep both for my own—the lot that carries with it wealth and distinction, and the lot that, by comparison, has nothing but love to recommend it?"

It seemed to her now that this question might be answered in the affirmative. At any rate, after hours of protracted thought, thus she answered it. And having thus

answered it, there remained naught to ruminant upon save "the means, the manner, and the end" of her twofold design.

It is plain that Ellinor Yorke compounded with her innate selfishness of disposition an indomitable will—a certain amount even of heroic capability which, had it been turned into another channel, and had her gender been masculine, might have won kingdoms for her, or at least would have placed her on a pinnacle as a prince of diplomatists, or as a distinguished tactician.

She arranged her plan of campaign, her whole line of march, step by step, at one sitting.

Step number one was to renew the intimacy she had formed a year ago with Lord Winterdowne at Florence. Here her thoughts naturally flew to Uncle Hugh, who had been on fairly intimate terms with Lord Winterdowne for some years past. Well, in that case, Uncle Hugh must be kept in a good humour, and made to undertake a certain amount of social hospitalities which would conduce to the desired end.

Step number two of course would be the bringing of Lord Winterdowne to her feet. That would be simple and everyday work enough to her.

Step number three would be most difficult of all to accomplish. It involved the keeping Phil her admiring, devoted slave, while she toyed and trifled with Lord Winterdowne and eventually married him.

But, though willing to admit that difficulties enough stood in the way of her wishes, the possibility of reversal and final defeat never once crossed her mind. Why should it? Up to the present she had played any game in life she had chosen, and had invariably won. What was there in this little simple game to make her heart quail?

So far as she could see, little Edie was about the bitterest, the strongest, and the cleverest foe she had to encounter. Yet, take her at the best, she could not magnify her into anything very bitter, very strong, very clever. She was little more than a child in years, her attractions were of the simplest, the freshest, the most unpretending order. Her easy winning of lover after lover was, no doubt, due to a fortunate combination of circumstances; it proved nothing as to her power of keeping them. To think that little Edie Fairfax could keep a lover whom she (Ellinor Yorke) had decided to win would have been, to her

way of thinking, quite the other end of absurdity.

"Give her the crown of England at once—why not?" said Ellinor, smiling to herself at the thought. "She, to hold, to keep, when I say let go! All her strength is in her smiles and her tears, and even those she hasn't the wisdom to keep in reserve and use with discretion!"

It can scarcely be wondered at if Ellinor, with such a train of thought set going in her brain, gave her answers in monosyllables, and showed herself generally uncompanionable to those around her.

Lucy, however, aroused her at last, in a measure that surprised herself, by spreading the letter from Mrs. Thorne's lawyers before her, and asking a word of advice as to what had best be done.

Ellinor awoke to sudden energy.

"Mr. Wickham ought to know of this. I will write to tell him at once," she said; and there and then she gave orders to Gretchen to pen the neat little note which had prevented Phil's visit to Stanham.

There are some birds which can be caught in a net, others with a handful of corn. There are others, also, who must be winged before they can be brought down. Phil Wickham belonged to this last order, and assuredly Lucy made the most willing and best trained stalking-horse imaginable, in whose shadow Ellinor could load her gun and take her aim at her leisure.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

PHIL brought a whole list of lung doctors for Ellinor to choose from. It took him the greater part of a morning to hunt up these names, and effectually prevented that "run down to Stanham" which he had thought so easy of accomplishment on the previous day during his up-journey. Somehow—the exact "how" he could not have explained to himself—this visit to Stanham seemed retiring into the distance; did not seem to stand out in such clear and brilliant colouring as it did some two days ago. He could not see quite so distinctly "in his mind's eye" Edie's bright little flush of welcome, the gleam of delight in her brown eyes, nor hear the sweet vibrating voice whispering tremulously—as once or twice in fancy he had heard it during his stay at Dartmoor: "Oh, Phil dear, this is heavenly! Don't go away any more."

Ellinor ran her eye lazily, sleepily over the doctors' names, then tossed them across the table to old Lady Moulsey, who, by

a rare chance, was present when Phil came in.

"What is it, my dear?" asked the old lady in her shrill, weak falsetto. "A charity subscription? Has there been another colliery accident—or is it for the Deceased Wife's Sister's Association?"

Ellinor only moved her lips in reply. Then she turned to Phil.

"Old people have so little in life to interest them," she said by way of explanation. "It may amuse her to wonder over the names for half an hour. Lucy will explain all to her when she comes in."

"It is delightful to see young people showing kindly consideration to their elders," said Phil sarcastically.

He never entered this young woman's presence without being in some way ruffled, troubled, grieved for her, and for her womanhood. He never left her presence without having given utterance to sarcasm or bitter speech of some sort. It was so with most men of Ellinor's acquaintance; yet for all that they never forsook her society until chance, circumstance, or the imperative mandate of the beauty herself compelled them to do so.

"Is that meant for a cut at me, or a compliment to Lucy?" asked Ellinor with a laugh. "Really, Mr. Wickham, if I were not bound to be very grateful for the trouble you have taken for me, I should feel inclined to say you were in a disagreeable frame of mind this morning."

"They are all doctors, my dear. Are they on the committee?" broke in Lady Moulsey's shrill treble once more.

Again Ellinor moved her lips, and Lady Moulsey, feeling, as she always did in Ellinor's presence, that her hearing was getting worse and worse every day she lived, laid the list of names on one side, and went back to her newspaper.

Ellinor took up the list.

"What a number of names you have managed to get together! What a multitude of wretched, miserable, croaking, sickly people there must be in the world?" Then after a pause: "It seems so odd for me to be going to a doctor."

"But you are not ill; why do you go?" asked Phil, surveying her superbly rounded form, her brilliant, shining eyes, the dainty colouring of lip and cheek.

"Ill!" laughed Ellinor; "I have never had a day's illness in my life; I am even shaking off my influenza without so much as a cup of gruel. It's only to set old Uncle

Hugh's mind at rest, that I am going to have my pulse felt and the stethoscope applied."

"Ah, I see. More consideration for old age and infirmities," murmured Phil.

"Exactly. How well you read me! And if you only knew how I hate the very name of doctor, you would appreciate my self-denial to its fullest extent. Doctors never come into a house without upsetting it from top to bottom. When they used to come (in sets of twos or threes) to see Juliet, they always left my mother in tears, and there was always a packing up of boxes, and a setting off to some wretched seaside place, the next day."

Ellinor did not often deal in such long speeches; she was, however, for some reason or other unusually animated that morning. The plans laid with such precision a day or two previously would certainly not fail for lack of energy in their execution.

A white frosty sun, shining in through the grey dulled window-panes, fell in scattered beams athwart a face which might have been that of the goddess of eternal youth itself for the fresh young life that coloured hair, eyes, cheek, and lip. "I have a score or so of years before me, not a doubt," that young face seemed to say, "wherein to hold court and receive taxes, condemn, punish, pardon, and release at will. Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years—eat, drink, be merry."

The same white sunlight went flowing over sofas and chairs to where, on the other side of the table, an old head in muslin-cap crooned over a *Times* newspaper, and showed up with merciless exactitude scant grey hairs, blurred eyesight, wrinkles which might be counted by twenties. "I shall soon be tenant of the house the sexton builds," this face might have said; "it can matter but little to me what goes on in this. Soul, drug thyself, and deaden thy senses now in the twilight as fast as possible, so that when the night comes thou wilt not know it."

Yet, perchance, had that old common arbitrator, Time, in person stood there between the old head and the young one, and appraised with his usual brutal frankness the days that remained to each, he might have said that there was not a pin to choose between them.

Lucy Selwyn, however, coming in from a morning's walk, would not have echoed old Time's dictum. To her, as she entered the room, the picture of Ellinor in wide,

high-backed chair (Ellinor invariably selected large, throne-like seats), with Phil on a low chair at her side, was sweet, fascinating, alluring. It brought back thoughts of her own young love-making days, which seemed now, alas! so far away in the dim distance. If only those two could be bound one to the other as she and Rodney had been! Ah, that unfortunate little girl in the country who was playing the game of fast and loose!

She went over to Lady Moulsey's side and offered to read her paper to her.

"Then they can talk," she said to herself, "or look or be silent just as they please. And if that Mr. Effingham comes this afternoon, I'll contrive somehow or other to see him alone, and I'll speak out plainly to him, and tell him that it does not follow, because a lady is good enough to let him paint her picture, therefore she has a special liking for him. Ridiculous—such an idea would frighten all charity out of one!"

As though in response to Lucy's kindly intentions, before she had got through her second column of *Law Reports* this Day, the servant entered, and announced the fact that Mr. Effingham had come, and had been shown into the room upstairs where his palette and easel had been left from the preceding day.

Phil jumped to his feet and took his hat. There came an unmistakable look of annoyance to his face. He had never before in his life spent so pleasant an hour in Ellinor's society, never before found her—after their first slight passage of arms—so womanly, so ductile, so winning. This was a sorry ending to it all.

"Why must you go?" asked Ellinor, looking up at him with soft eyes. "What objection can you have to my poor little artist friend?"

"I object to the whole genus, they are coxcombs to a man!" answered Phil, brusquely, savagely.

"So do I," chimed in Lucy, laying down her newspaper; "they invariably think that permission to paint a lady's face gives equal right to say any amount of ridiculous things to her."

"Then why does the lady grant the permission in the first instance," said Phil coldly, still holding out his hand to say good-bye, "when she knows the inevitable consequence of her kindness?" and when he had said this he could not for the life of him make out how the words had found their way to his lips, any more than he

could account to himself for the queer thrill of annoyance that went through him at the mere mention of this young artist's name.

"Why, indeed?" murmured Ellinor in slow, thoughtful tones, and taking no notice of Phil's outstretched hand. "Lucy, ring the bell, please."

And when the servant came in answer to the bell, the order given was:

"Tell Mr. Effingham I cannot see him this morning. I will write to him in the course of the day."

Phil's hand fell to his side. Why—why—what did this, could this, mean? He threw at Ellinor one long, searching, questioning look—a look which she answered with another, soft, assuring, penetrating.

Lucy, from behind her newspaper, saw the look and the counter-look, and interpreted both according to her own hopes and wishes.

"He loves her—she loves him. Ah, that little girl at Stanham, who is playing fast and loose!"

Ellinor's voice broke in on her thoughts. Only four words, but spoken with an emphasis that gave them the weight of forty.

"Now, will you go?" she asked, never once lifting her gaze from Phil's face.

Phil made one desperate effort.

"I must go—must go," he said hurriedly, "and at once."

And with an energy and swiftness that would have done credit to a Queen's Messenger, he said his adieu, and made his way down the stairs and out of the house.

With seven-leagued steps he strode back to his hotel, sat down to his luncheon, and got up from it, leaving it untasted. Then he strode out again—up Piccadilly, down Piccadilly, round all three parks in succession, went into a friend's house, collared him just as he was sitting down to dinner, and carried him off to one of the Strand theatres. Then he astonished the said friend by starting up in the most thrilling part of the performance, leaving the box, and setting off on his peregrinations once more. This time he made the circuit of Bayswater, coming back by way of the Marble Arch, and returning to his hotel somewhere in the small hours of the morning.

The cause of Phil's perturbation may be stated in one sentence. He believed himself to be false in heart to little Edie Fairfax.

Like many men with tolerably clear consciences, he exaggerated the contemplation of a false step into the actual taking of the step itself.

"She looked at me with eyes of love. How did I look back at her?" he kept saying to himself with every tread he made on the frosty ground. "Oh, Edie—Edie, how shall I ever look you in the face again!"

Six o'clock that morning found Phil seated at a writing-table, penning some half-dozen lines.

"*EDIE, EDIE*"—this was what he wrote—"For the love of Heaven, say I may come back to you, and let us be married right off at once." PHILIP WICKHAM."

Someone else beside Phil was busy with pen and ink that morning before breakfast, and that was Lucy Selwyn.

After Phil had so abruptly left the house on the preceding day, from the extreme of animation Ellinor had passed to the extreme of taciturnity.

Lucy, absorbed in her own thoughts, did not observe the fact till at night, when she went, as she generally did, into Ellinor's dressing-room for a five minutes' chat before going to bed. Then she noted the weary look of Ellinor's eyes, the languid pose of head and arms, the slow, reluctant speech.

"Are you ill?" was her first question, to which Ellinor vouchsafed no reply.

Then Lucy curled herself about Ellinor's knees and feet in front of the low-burning fire, and looking up in the sad, beautiful face, cried out passionately:

"Oh, my darling, my darling, I wish I could make you happy! I would lay down my life for you!"

Ellinor looked down on her wearily, and there fell a pause between the two girls.

"Does she love him, do you think?" whispered Lucy at length, knowing there was no need to mention names, as their thoughts must be flowing in one channel.

Ellinor opened her lips with energy.

"She love him!" she said bitterly. "Is a heartless flirt capable of love? I tell you she loves him no more than he loves her!"

Lucy crept away to her own room in silence, her thoughts very busy, her heart very full. She passed as restless a night as Phil. And the post the next day, with Phil's few hurried lines, carried also a letter from her to Miss Edie Fairfax.

## PURITAN DISCIPLINE.

MANY people who go to church on Ash Wednesday and listen to the Communion Service, feel very doubtful — when the minister reads the reference to a certain "godly discipline" which prevailed in the primitive Church, "when such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance and punished in this world" — whether it is, as the minister goes on to declare, "much to be wished" "that the said discipline may be restored again," and most of us, looking at the list of offences for which the transgressor was put to open shame, feel, no doubt, that for our own sakes it is better that the said "godly discipline" should remain in the limbo of things departed.

Public penance was not a punishment to be despised even in the earliest days. It was such an open avowal of guilt that, although everyone might have known all about the sin before, the penitent was deprived of what scraps of comfort he might have enjoyed in fancying that those of his friends, who politely avoided the subject, were ignorant of it. Many men were deterred from peccadilloes of which the law declined to take notice, by the dread of the white sheet; but, at best, it contained only the deterrent without the reforming element which social economists tell us that all penalties ought to combine.

Among the enthusiastic nonconforming sects which flourished during the Commonwealth, "godly discipline" was in high favour. The sturdy Puritans did not trouble themselves about the ideal constituents of punishment, but they were very clear that discipline meant shame, and that shame was an effective deterrent. The discipline was of various kinds, varying according to the offence or the customs of the sect, or, occasionally, the whim of the pastor. Sometimes it consisted in the offending member being placed in a conspicuous position in full view of the congregation and solemnly rebuked, and sometimes in a more or less protracted suspension from the membership of the sect. Occasionally it took the aspect of a fine, or even the wearing of a particular dress, but these cases were rare. The white sheet was dispensed with among most Nonconformists, as savouring too much of Romish ceremonial, not to say "idolatry."

In some respects many of the Puritan sects were modelled upon the idea of a family. The members had "oversight" of

each other, and were held, in great measure, responsible for each other's conduct. The Quakers, for example, made rules for the guidance of their fellows in every possible condition of life. If a man could not control his unruly children, he was to bring them before the "monthly meeting" to be reprimanded. Only fancy an obstreperous Eton boy of fourteen before such a grave sanhedrim! How much he would be awed by their gravity! How he would appreciate their censures, and lay their advice to heart! With what dread he would hear the sentence, "That he be cut off from the meeting for six months!" However much such a boy would despise this kind of discipline, the Quaker children were of different mould, and looked upon the ordinances of their society with profound veneration, for they had a real love for it. Thus in Bristol, when, in 1659, nearly all the adult Quakers were in prison, the children kept on the "meetings for worship" on Sunday mornings, and persisted in attending, though waylaid and beaten in the streets. More than once we find Town Councils at this period gravely considering what steps should be taken to wean these young Quakers from the error of their ways. Stripes and imprisonment were the usual means tried, seldom with much success. To such children the "godly discipline" held far more terrors than the stoutest birch-rod, perhaps because they had had experience of the worst the latter could do, while the power of the former was still problematical.

"Godly discipline" commonly took no note of such offences as the law punished — not, of course, that an unfortunate who was thrown into prison for, say, theft, would be permitted to remain a member of his "church;" for such offences the ecclesiastical penalty was usually excommunication—but no social offence against the laws of the sect was too small. At one place we read of a man being subjected to discipline for not ploughing with sufficient care, in another of a woman for going a milking when she ought to have been at meeting.

Some Quakers were once subjected to a very severe "discipline" for singing at a meeting, and in one instance a poor woman was refused admittance into a community because, in the one she had left, singing had been permitted.

Love of dress was frequently a cause for the exercise of discipline. Among all sects of the Puritans a weakness for "outward

adorning of the body" was considered a sign of an exceedingly unregenerate nature. In his epistles to the sect he had founded, George Fox very frequently lays down sumptuary laws for the guidance of his followers, and does not hesitate to express a very decided opinion upon those weak brethren who took a more than necessary pride in their appearance. "Away," he writes upon one occasion, "with your long peaks behind in the skirts of your waist-coats, and your great needless flying scarves like colours on your backs."

In truth, honest George was much exercised in mind regarding the dress of the younger Friends, and at one time seems to have got as angry as his pacific nature admitted at a certain vestment which he calls a "skimming-dish hat"—a becoming head-gear to which pretty Quaker damsels did much incline. It was very rarely that Fox required any to be personally disciplined, he wisely preferring general admonitions. Some of his followers, however, were not so particular, and the records of the early society abound with the names of offenders who were brought to book.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century those Quakeresses who proposed to attend the York meeting were summoned to a preliminary gathering, and were required to wear thereat the clothes in which they intended to appear at York, so that their apparel might be approved or disallowed. The Irish and Scottish Friends carried matters a step farther. In 1686 the Quakers in Dublin appointed committees of tailors "to see that none did exceed the bounds of truth in making apparel according to the vain and changing fashions of the world," and instructed them to report cases in which this was done. In Scotland the Friends kept books containing minute details of what they considered "godly apparel," and even inspected the houses of the members to see that they contained nothing that had been disallowed. Among the things disallowed were costly furniture, instruments of music, and "light books." If such were found, the owners were, of course, subjected to discipline, and, in aggravated cases, turned out of the society, or, as it was termed, disowned.

Love frequently brought upon many young Puritans, both male and female, the dreaded discipline. From the records of the Independents at Rothwell, we find that one young man was disciplined "for stealing away a maid's affections, leaving

her, falsifying his word, and going to others." Another Lothario was punished for "professing to love one sister when engaged to another," and one unfortunate man suffered "for having no conjugal affection." One Damaris Lenton was disciplined "for dealing deceitfully and unjustly with a young man."

If these Puritans were unable to make man and wife live in "peace and concord," they did their best to keep the scandal quiet. In the records of the same church there is an entry relating that Sister Barnes was disciplined for "disobedience to her husband." A man at Warboys suffered because he "did not love his wife as he ought," and another at Fenstanton because he showed "such an ill carriage to his wife as to beat her in the street."

Entries of discipline for "idleness," "foolish football play," "nine-pins," and the like are very common, as are also those for "vain conversation," "dancing," "fiddling," "flaunting apparel," "backbiting," "pride," and "conforming to the fashions of the wicked world." An amusing account of these is given in *The Baptists and Quakers in Northamptonshire*, a tract from which several of the foregoing instances have been taken.

Servants who neglected their employers' interests came in for their share of reprobation. Men were disciplined for "unfaithfulness in their master's service," for "idleness in their calling," and even, in one case, for "riding over new-mown grass."

Punishment was inflicted upon one unhappy Baptist for being married in the "national way"—presumably at the parish church. Going to church or to a Quaker's meeting the Baptists thought an offence worthy of public admonition. The Strict Baptists once went so far as to admonish one person "to leave off going to the General Baptists," another for "keeping company with a carnal man and a professed Quaker," and a third for "speaking against dissent."

"In 1700," to quote from the before-mentioned tract, "Brother Warner's case in regard to his practice of music was considered by the Church in College Lane (Northampton), and it was judged to be unlawful and not allowable for him to practise it in any company, civil or profane, because of the evil attendances and consequences that might arise thereupon, but only in the service of the town, according as allowed him at his first admittance into

ye Church." One poor woman was refused her "dismissal" from the society at Walgrave to that at College Lane, because "the Church in College Lane practised singing publickly, and admitted Sts. as Sts. without respect to Baptism."

Can we wonder that, when discipline was so freely used for such small and fanciful offences, and a spirit of such narrow-minded bigotry so proudly exhibited, the records of the early Churches should be so full of notices of members who have left to join other denominations?

There can be no doubt that "discipline" had its advantages, and fittingly filled an otherwise vacant space in the early Non-conformist organisations, but it is equally certain that its application to such paltry uses as have been recorded in this article, hastened the downfall of Puritanism.

#### CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

##### ESSEX.

A MARSHY and a plashy land is Essex, at least in the parts best known to the multitude. Alike from sea and river its shores appear low and uninviting, with spongy islands, all awash with the sea, and muddy rivers crawling forth amid shallows and sandbanks. And the county owes little but disparagement to its great neighbour, London, which uses it as an outfall for its sewage, for a general rubbish-heap and dépôt of odd lumber, and as a site for anything especially unpleasant or noxious in the way of manufactures.

But beyond the metropolitan area lies a green and pleasant country singularly quiet and secluded, even although visited at times by swarms of London excursionists; a country intersected by bridle-paths and green lanes, while the wide and tranquil highway leads by quaint little settlements and quiet roadside inns. For, though no longer cut off from the rest of the world by thick forests and deep, miry ways, Essex is still more or less inaccessible from the great wilderness of London which lies in the way. To reach Essex, we must pass through Stratford-atte-Bow, with its mingled fumes from chemical works, match-factories, and muddy flats; and although the name of Stratford recalls the fact that the great Roman way to the colony of Colchester here crossed the river Lea, there is nothing in the place itself that tempts investigation. But modern highway and railway alike follow pretty

closely the track of the old Roman road, and the towns and villages strung along their course are pleasant country towns on the sites of ancient settlements which existed when the rest of the county to the northward and westward was a wild and savage forest.

Colchester itself can claim a history more ancient and distinguished, perhaps, than that of any other town in the land, for we have full evidence in the Roman annals of its existence as a great British city before it became a Roman colony. It was the chief town of the Trinobantes, a British tribe whose internal dissensions gave Julius Caesar a pretext for interfering in their affairs. The British city, with its grassy entrenchments, with ample room within for the huts of the tribesmen, and space for their cattle and waggons, may still be traced in a wide circle about the later Roman town.

On beginning in earnest the conquest of Britain, one of the first cares of the Romans was to establish a colony at Camulodunum. The Trinobantes, who at first had been friendly to the men of Rome, and who had allotted them lands for their settlement, became, in the course of events, suspicious, and, finally, hostile. Caractacus, whose Celtic name was, probably, Caradawg, was, according to some accounts, the son of Cunobelius, king of the Trinobantes, the Cymbeline of Shakespeare. The Welsh give him another pedigree. According to their triads, Caradawg was the son of Bran the Blessed, who first brought the Christian faith into the land; but, anyhow, he was a prince who commanded the allegiance of the scattered British tribes. Under this brave chief the war of independence was carried on against the Romans, and we find Caractacus sometimes making head against them with his own tribe, and sometimes at the head of the men of Siluria, in the west. The story of the final betrayal of this bravest of the Britons, of his appearance in the streets of Rome, and of his surprise that people should come from such a city of palaces to fight for the hovels of Britain, is what every British schoolboy now knows, and yet may eventually forget. But, according to the Welsh account, the actual betrayer of Caradawg, and the cause of the eventual conquest by the Romans, was a woman—Voedawg, the princess who is better known to us as Boadicea.

And here the chronicle of Colchester comes into the broad light of undoubted and trustworthy history. The Emperor

Claudius had made of Camulodunum a colony of veteran soldiers—of the second, ninth, and fourteenth legions. All was quiet among Iceni and Trinobantes, while the Romans were pushing their conquests into Wales, and driving those mysterious Druids into a corner. Things were probably as quiet then at Camulodunum as they are to-day at Colchester, with a camp in the neighbourhood, and a small garrison in the town; and drill and parade, and a saunter about the town, made up the soldier's day, while the veterans grumbled over their allotments as their wives at home did over the little British slave-girls who could be made to do nothing properly. Such mutterings as were heard of the coming tempest were of the superstitious order. Strange portents were in the air; strange noises were heard in the court, howlings resounded in the theatre, and an apparition of a colony destroyed was seen in the estuary of the Thames. The sea looked bloody; and in the ebb the effigies of human bodies were left upon the shore.

The native princes of the tribe lived still, it seems, in their capital—just as some Indian Rajah may now reside under the walls of the English fort—and these British chiefs were probably aware of what was brewing among the neighbouring tribes. In a similar rising against the English power in Wales, chiefs and people were roused to madness by a grey-headed bard, who, pointing to the sculptured form of stern Edward over the castle that was the token of their subjection, demanded if the blood of men flowed in their veins or they were but leaden puppets. In the same way, when the real or fancied wrongs of Boadicea and her daughters had set the people in a ferment, the bards and sooth-sayers pointed to the proud walls of Camulodunum and the temple of the vile Emperor which insulted the deities of the land.

The Iceni rose as one man; the city was assailed on all sides. The garrison was feeble, the fortifications were hastily run up at the last moment; the troops which might have defended it were in remote quarters; and on the second day of the siege the stronghold was stormed, and all who had sought refuge in it, armed or unarmed, were slaughtered.

The Roman general, recalled in haste from the west, was unable to stem the fierce onset of the Britons; he saw London fall and then Verulam. Britain seemed

lost to the Roman power, when the triumphant tribes launched themselves in the open against the serried ranks of the Roman legions, and were crushed in the encounter. Then the mutiny was quelled as quickly as it had arisen.

Camulodunum rose from its ashes, and resumed its place as the chief station in that part of Britain. The museum of Colchester displays a rich collection of antiquities discovered in every part of the entrenched area. Coins and urns without number, elaborate pavements, extensive hypocausts, attest the long-continued prosperity of the favoured colony. Legends rather than history bring in Camulodunum as the royal seat of Coel, who may be the original of the King Cole of the nursery-rhyme. When the legions revolted from the Emperors of Rome, and established Carausius as a district Cæsar of their own election, Constantius, who was one of the legitimate Cæsars, landed in England from Boulogne, and invested Colchester, which held out against him. But Coel had a beautiful daughter, Helen, who undertook to arrange matters with the Roman Cæsar, and he, at once a slave to her beauty, married the fair Helen on the spot. And hence, in due time, sprang an heir to the purple in Constantine, hereafter to be known as the Great. That Helen, the mother of Constantine, was a British princess there is some evidence to show, though the Welsh claim her as theirs, and even show you her father's house, and are acquainted with his pedigree. But whether Colchester may not rightly claim her, after all, is a point which, perhaps, will never be determined.

As to what befell Colchester when the Romans left the land, there is no evidence to show. Probably the town, which owed its prosperity to its civil and military establishments, became almost depopulated when these were withdrawn. Nor is much to be said about the place under the dominion of the East Saxons, who have made such a very small splash in the troubled waters of history, that nobody knows much about them. But about the tenth century the town became the chief stronghold of the Danes in Eastern England, and they patched up the old Roman walls, and held them stoutly, till Edward the Elder stormed the town, and put all its defenders to the sword.

There was a considerable vitality about this old town after all, for it cuts a very respectable figure in Domesday, with two hundred and seventy-six burgesses and

three hundred and fifty-five houses, and, as the East Saxons took the Conquest quietly and without struggling, the town suffered no hurt, except, indeed, from the archaeological standpoint. For when Eudo Dapifer, the Conqueror's steward, fixed upon the acropolis of Colchester as the site for his new castle, it was occupied by remains of the old Roman world that would have been of vastly greater interest than even the really fine Norman keep that now occupies the site. For Colchester Castle is built, in great part, of the bricks and stones of old Camulodunum, as, indeed, are the foundations of most of her churches and older buildings.

Henceforth, Colchester suffered, every now and then, from quarrels with which she had little concern. As a walled town commanding one of the great highways to the north-eastern part of the kingdom, she became of importance in the wars of John with his barons, and was taken and retaken according to the fortunes of war. But it is interesting to find the town carrying on a private war of its own with all the zest of one of the free cities of the age, when a neighbouring baron tried to rob the town of its fishery—the fishing-rights of the river Colne confirmed to it by royal charter. The assailant of the privileges of the town, one Lionel de Biddenham, actually ventured to attack and besiege the place—this was in the reign of Edward the Third—but he was beaten off, and eventually expiated his offences against the King's peace by a heavy fine. From that time Colchester escaped all perils of siege and battle till the days of the civil wars.

In the reign of Elizabeth a considerable number of Flemings settled at Colchester, where they established manufactures of "sayes and bayes," which flourished for awhile, but declined during the seventeenth century, and finally died away in the eighteenth. It needed not this addition to make Colchester a stronghold of Puritanism. Essex has always been a nursery of strange sects and strong individual opinions. The strange tenets of the sect named the Family of Love, whose chief apostle was Christopher Vitels, the disciple of Henry Nicholson, of Delft, found many adherents at Colchester a few centuries ago, just as at the present day the Latterday Saints and other novelties in the way of religious bodies find ready disciples in the neighbourhood. With this strong feeling on the part of the townspeople, it must have been

doubly vexatious to have had to undergo all kinds of hardships and trials on behalf of the royal party, and to be banged about by the guns of their own friends. Yet just this was the fate of Chelmsford. She had escaped all the troubles of the civil wars to the very end, when, Charles being a captive and all resistance on his part at an end, the Royalists of Kent, who had not bestirred themselves much before, rose in rebellion against the Parliament.

Finding the Parliamentary army, led by Fairfax, the Black Tom of the Yorkshire legend, likely to prove too many for them, a portion of the Royalist forces broke off and crossed the Thames at Greenwich to join the Royalists of Essex, who were also in arms. These last had already captured the committee of Parliament sitting at Chelmsford, and now joined their forces with the Kentish men at Brentwood. The joint force then marched against Colchester, but found the gates of the town shut against them by the inhabitants. With a little resolution on the part of these last the Royalists had been lost, for they were in no way prepared to undertake a siege, and overwhelming forces were gathering on all sides to crush them. But the town capitulated without making an effort at defence, on condition of respect for person and property, and the Cavaliers marched in just as the vedettes of the pursuing force began to come in sight. Fairfax himself came up ere long with the bulk of the army, and encamped upon Lexden Heath. At once he delivered an assault upon the town, and succeeded in gaining the suburbs and the old abbey of St. John, which was now the residence of the Lucas family. But his men were repulsed from the walls of the town, and Fairfax sat down before the place and began a regular siege. This lasted eleven weeks, and at the latter part of the siege garrison and townsmen were driven to feed on horses, dogs, and cats, which diet was embittered to the Colchester people by the thought that it was endured for a cause they detested. In the end the garrison capitulated, under the hard conditions of quarter only to privates and officers under the rank of captain—the lives of all the superior officers being left at the discretion of Black Tom and his council of war.

The inn is still shown where the bold Cavaliers awaited the result of the council, whiling away the tedium of expectation with songs and sack. Then the decision was made known. The three chief officers,

Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, and Sir Bernard Gascoyne, must suffer death, the rest to be detained as prisoners of war. It was presently discovered that Gascoyne was a Florentine, and, therefore, not to be classed as a rebel, so that he was respited, while the other two were taken to the green on the north side of the castle, where a stone still marks the spot, and shot. The tomb of the two victims is to be found in the vaults of St. Giles's Church, with a monument recording the death of these valiant captains on the 28th of August, 1648. "By command of Sir Thomas Fairfax, then general of the Parliamentary army, in cold blood barbarously murdered." The letters are deeply cut, as if to preserve the inscription as a record for the avenging angel. It is probably unjust to Black Tom, who was not in any way a bloodthirsty man, and it is recorded that after the Restoration, Fairfax's daughter, who had married the Duke of Buckingham, coming to hear of the inscription, moved her husband to apply to Charles the Second to order its erasure. The King was inclined to comply, but asked Lord Lucas, the brother of one of the victims, if he had any objection. To which Lucas replied, not at all, if his majesty would permit the following to be substituted : "Barbarously murdered for the sake of a King, whose son directed the record to be erased." Charles upon this, so the story goes, ordered the original inscription to be cut still more deeply.

Of this Lucas family was that eccentric and literary Duchess of Newcastle, whose fame is preserved in the diaries of Pepys and Evelyn, and whose monument—a florid, sprawling affair—exists in Westminster Abbey. It is a monument to her husband also, that gallant Cavendish who so gallantly sent back Tom Fairfax's wife in his own coach when that lady had been taken prisoner, as related in our Yorkshire Chronicles; but the monument has most to say about the lady, who perhaps helped to compose the inscription : "Her name was Margaret Lucas, youngest sister to Lord Lucas, of Colchester, a noble family, for all the brothers were valiant, and all the sisters virtuous."

A little apart from the main line of communication—modern as well as Roman—between Stratford and Colchester, half-way or thereabouts between Chelmsford and Dunmow, lies the once notable Castle of Pleshy, of which little is left but the fine earthworks and

some scattered fragments. The grand entrenchment which surrounds the Norman keep is probably Roman; but the castle itself was noted once as the chief residence of the De Bohuns, and as conferring on its holder the proud title of High Constable of England. Here, in the reign of Richard the Second, lived Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, who had married the eldest daughter and heiress of the De Bohuns, and through her possessed this princely castle. The Duke of Gloucester was the youngest, and, perhaps, the best of the seven sons of Edward the Third. At any rate he was the most popular; and, as the weakness and want of character of the reigning King became more manifest, many eyes were turned to him to redress the balance of the State. Already, when the King was yet a minor, the Duke had joined with other great lords in driving away the young King's favourites, and remodelling matters in the old-fashioned direction. And had the Duke but had a son, it is highly probable that he—the Duke, that is—would have been called by general acclaim to depose Richard, and assume the crown. As it was, the Duke was elderly, possessed of a good deal of family loyalty, and not likely to prove dangerous to the ruling monarch. Still, Richard suspected him, at any rate, of a design to curb his power, and so determined to remove him. But to arrest the High Constable of England in his own strong castle was no easy task—the men of Essex were devoted to their good Duke, who might easily have set the eastern part of England afame. And thus King Richard was driven to dissemble, and himself to undertake the office of decoy.

Froissart tells the story in graphic simplicity. How the King rode over from Havering-atte-Bower, where he had been hunting, all in the fine warm weather, and rode into the great court at Pleshy, about five o'clock, when the cry was raised, "The King is come!" And the Duke, who had just risen from supper—he was a temperate man, and not given to long sittings over the wine-cup—came forth in all haste with the Duchess to greet their unexpected guest. The King was all warmth and cordiality, and, having eaten in the hall, explained the purpose of his visit. He bade the Duke ride with him presently, with two or three men, leaving the rest of his train to follow at leisure, for he, the King, had to meet the men of London on the morrow,

and he must have his uncle's advice in the matter. The Duke, nothing loth, had horses saddled, and rode away with the King towards London ; the princes conversing cordially and amicably together. When they neared Stratford, and the marshes by the River Lea, and the bridge across the river that Saxon Matilda had built for her well-beloved nuns of Barking, the King rode on in front as if to give some orders to his train, and the Duke found himself suddenly surrounded by horsemen who had been concealed by the bridge, and from among them rode forth the sinister form of Thomas Mowbray, Earl Marshal, who laid his hand upon the Duke's rein, and arrested him for high treason. The Duke cried to his nephew, who was just within earshot, but whether the King heard him or not was doubtful ; anyhow, he rode on, and took no notice. Then the Duke was carried secretly on board ship, and taken over sea to Calais, where he was privily murdered.

O sit my husband's wrongs on Hereford's spear,  
That it may enter butcher Mowbray's heart,  
cries the widowed Duchess, on the eve of  
the famous wager of battle at Coventry,  
made famous by Shakespeare in Richard  
the Second ; and in the same breath she  
sends a message to her brother, Edmund  
York, to bid him

With all good speed at Plashy visit me.  
Alack ! and what shall good old York there see,  
But empty lodgings, and unfurnished walls,  
Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones ?

And thus Pleshy has remained ever since, gradually falling to ruin and decay.

But while it was yet a strong castle, one more dramatic incident took place within its walls, closely connected with the foregoing. The deposition and imprisonment of Richard had occurred soon after, and old Gaunt's son was now upon the throne, and thus Richard's punishment had followed closely on his crime. But another victim was doomed, and this the late King's half-brother, John Holand, Earl of Exeter, who had engaged in an unsuccessful rising against the recently-crowned king. This rebellion was extinguished practically by the Mayor of Cirencester, who surprised the leaders of the rebel army unattended in the town, and cut off the heads of two of them, while their army, encamped outside the town, took flight in panic at the disturbance within. John Holand escaped, and rode for his life into Essex, where he hoped to take ship for France. But the people of

the county rose against him and caught him, and knowing him for an enemy to their late Duke, they brought him to Pleshy, and struck off his head in the same courtyard that had witnessed his royal brother's deceitful visit. And so the old place was left to the bats and crows, and an evil reputation still clings to its deserted precincts.

Another old feudal fortress is Headingham Castle, with its square Norman keep, of the same age as Gundulf's Tower at Rochester and the White Tower of London. This was long the stronghold of the De Veres, the great lords of the district, and stewards of the ancient forests of Essex. As late as the time of King Stephen, the greater part of the county was a royal hunting-ground, and subject to forest laws, but the work of clearing and settlement had already begun, and in the reign of King John all the part north of Stone Street was disafforested. Still, the powers and privileges of the steward were great, and as the royal forests shrank in size, the broad lands of the De Veres increased in like proportion.

The De Veres had suffered much for the House of Lancaster. Father and son had died on the scaffold, and another son had suffered long imprisonment and penniless exile, but lived to lead the van of Richmond's army at Bosworth Field. The event of that battle restored to him all the ancient possessions of his house. In his prosperity he was visited by Henry the Seventh at Headingham ; where, proud to entertain his royal master, he assembled all his retainers to do him honour. Not long before had been passed the Statute of Retainers, intended to increase the power of the crown by limiting the private armies of the great lords, so when the King saw before him a long line of the Earl's servants in their livery coats and cognizances, he turned with his chilly smile to the Earl, and suggested that surely these handsome gentleman and yeomen were his menial servants. The Earl smiled in turn at the notion of keeping up such a costly array of household incapables, and explained that these gentlemen were his retainers who came to do him service, and chiefly to see his grace the King.

Then the King's artificial smile turned to a very genuine frown, as he muttered that he would not have his laws broken in his sight, and so set Mr. Attorney at him, while the Earl was glad to compound with a fine of fifteen thousand

marks for his offence, which kept the poor Earl in financial hot-water for the rest of his days. Still, the De Veres continued to hold their own in the ranks of the great nobles without coming into any great prominence till a spendthrift earl—the seventeenth of this long line—dissipated the family estates, and sold the castle to his father-in-law, Lord Burleigh, when the castle was mostly razed and dismantled. The old Norman keep proved too tough for the work of demolition, and so remains, a solitary monument of the existence of the once lordly dwelling.

Another grand old mansion is New Hall, in Boreham parish, not far from Chelmsford, of which the remains are now occupied as a nunnery, originally the refuge of sisters from Liège, who fled from the violence of the Revolution. Originally this was a semi-fortified house, a perfect quadrangle, all the principal windows facing into the inner square, while, without, only blank walls presented themselves to the unfriendly visitor. The house formerly belonged to Thomas, the father of Ann Boleyn, who exchanged it for another with King Henry the Eighth, with whom it became a favourite seat. Then the Duke of Buckingham had it for a time, and after him, Monk, Duke of Albemarle, the restorer of the monarchy. The restorer's son, Christopher, married Elizabeth, one of the heiresses of the great Newcastle estates—the beginning, seemingly, of great honour and glory for the Monks. But the soft young Duke had but an evil time of it with his proud, half-crazy bride, and when he died, Elizabeth married another Duke, and from half crazy became wholly so—went mad with pride, says Horace Walpole—and fancying herself Empress of China, lived to a great age at Clerkenwell, keeping up her mad grandeur to the last, and being served always on the knee. In the time of this poor mad creature New Hall was abandoned, and became ruinous, and was at last sold to one Mr. Olmius, who pulled down the greater part of it. A fine painted window, that once adorned the splendid chapel of the Hall, was sold to the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, when the chapel was destroyed, and is still to be seen in the parish church.

Other points of interest can only briefly be noticed—Ongar, with the keep of Richard de Lacy's castle, and Greensted close by, with its wonderful wooden church, the nave formed of the split trunks of chestnut-trees, where tradition has it that

the corpse of a King once rested, though we must go back to the days of St. Edmund the Martyr to find a likely subject for the legend. Then there is Otes, once the seat of the Mashams, where John Locke found a congenial home, and where he died and was buried. And the grand old gateway of Nether Hall suggests curiosity as to its former owners, the Colts, of whom nothing particular is known.

Much, too, might be said of the forests of Essex, of Epping, and the wood and deer-stealers of old times, of the squatters and gipsies, and of the old forest-lore that is now passing away. What a pleasant glimpse you get of the old life in the custom of the manor of Corringham, and the fat buck and doe that the manor owed yearly to the great church of St. Paul on the days of the conversion and commemoration of its patron saint! The dean and chapter received the tribute in full canons, and afterwards formed a stately procession about the cathedral till they issued at the great west door, "when the keeper that brought it blew the death of the buck" on his great twisted horn; "and then the horns that were about the city answered him in like manner."

And with the echoes of the hunter's horn dying away in the distance, we may fitly take our leave of Essex, its marshes, forests, old manors, and castles, and still older relics of yet more ancient worlds.

#### ABOUT THE DOCKS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

SOME years after the visit recorded in a former paper, I made a second pilgrimage to the docks. On this occasion I had to see a young man off to a distant colony, and having to go down beforehand to the ship, which was lying in the Albert Docks, I took a river steamer to North Woolwich. Arrived at Woolwich, I had to wait some twenty minutes for a train, and, after two changes and some further twenty minutes to half an hour's travelling, I arrived at the station near which they said the steamer was lying. After some time I found her lying against a wharf, and made my way on board. Finding nobody on deck, and the companion-door open, I went below, where, in the cabin, I found the captain enjoying the luxury of doing nothing, and his wife sitting by him, writing letters. She had come down to the docks to be with him

during the short time he was at home between one cruise and another, and seemed to spend most of her time on board her husband's vessel.

On my next visit, when I took my young colonist with me, I was received with the cordiality of old friendship by the captain and his wife, and when the day arrived for my young man to go on board with his baggage, these good-hearted people were vying with each other in doing kindnesses for the passengers. The wife was going to leave her husband that afternoon, but that did not prevent her spending most of her time in doing the honours of the cabin to the one lady who was going out in it, and to those who came down with the other passengers. Already, lying against the quay-side, that little world had taken its individual character, and its inmates, with only an acquaintance of a few minutes, were trying to increase its comfort for each other.

Round the steamer there was the usual energetic life of the docks proceeding in its usual undemonstrative way. Tons upon tons of merchandise was constantly being brought by train and barge, and piled up in mountains in the sheds, from which, by some magical process, it almost immediately melted away into the holds of the various ships. Having to enquire for a small package, which had been sent up from a distant part of the country for conveyance by the steamer, I was referred to a cabin in one of the sheds. The civil man I found there turned to a register, and told me, not only that my package had been put on board, but when it was put there, and the part of the vessel in which it was stowed. I certainly was not able to verify his statement, but he made it with an air of assurance that convinced me.

Leaving the ship we walked towards the pretty little hotel, which quite startles one by its appearance in that grim, gaunt marsh. To get to it we had to cross a swing-bridge over one of the locks that give entrance to the basin, and arrived there just as the bridge was being swung back to admit a splendid Peninsular and Oriental ship. The passage through which she had to pass seemed to be about two feet wider than the ship herself. A vessel of that size—she must have been about four thousand tons—has an impetus when she moves that is formidable in so confined a space. Her movements have consequently to be cautious, and so slow that her own rudder is of little or no use to her. Her

guidance, therefore, has to be entrusted to tugs, one ahead and one astern, and so skilfully is this done, that the mighty vessel crept through this narrow passage without scratching an inch of paint off her side.

She was an interesting sight as she moved slowly and majestically by. She was carrying troops among her passengers. The men in their red uniforms stood about in groups, forward; the sergeants and orderlies hustled about with order-books in their hands and looks of importance on their faces; the officers walked up and down the deck talking to the friends who had come to meet them; ladies sat about in deck-chairs, looking as if the ship was their natural home. On the bridge conning the ship were the captain and dock-master; on the forecastle, in the chains, and at the stern, the officers of the ship watched the passage of that dangerous point with anxious eyes. Round the funnel the native crew sat chattering to each other, crouched up in that most uncomfortable-looking position that black men affect; and astride of the extreme end of the spanker-boom a carefully-dressed ebony gentleman sat, holding in his extended hand a small flag—the signal that the ship is under way in the docks. I had seen him in exactly the same position more than an hour before, and as he passed me he showed no sign of fatigue or any other emotion. He might, indeed, have been carved out of ebony.

Our last view of the ship in which we were particularly interested, was not altogether pleasing. She was to sail at an early hour the next morning, and lots of things that had come down late were piled about, cumbersing the deck. Berths were being knocked up, forward, for some second-class passengers, who all looked miserable enough in still water—what their state would be a few hours after I did not like to think. Aft, on the quarter-deck, two butchers were hard at work hacking, sawing, cutting at carcasses; chucking the pieces down on the deck as they cut them off, much as if they had been chunks of wood. Below, boxes and packages tripped you up at every turn—nothing was in its place, except in the captain's cabin, and nobody knew where to look for anything. As you came on deck again a bigger pile of most unpleasant-looking masses of meat met you on either hand. It was rather a depressing condition in which to take leave of a boy who was being suddenly turned loose upon the world.

When work is going on, the docks have a certain beauty and interest of their own; but it is only from the evidence of concentrated life and energy, and when work ceases the dreariness is in proportion to the previous energy. Outside the dock-gates the dreary sameness is overpowering. Endless miles of streets, each one exactly like its neighbour; streets neither rich enough to throw off care and be gay, nor poor enough to be careworn; merely staid, featureless respectability, without one spark of imagination to relieve it.

On week-days in bright weather there is movement that to some extent mitigates this awful sameness; but if fate ordains that you should walk through those streets on Sunday at mid-day, you pray that something may happen—no matter what, even if it be fraught with danger to your own life and limb—to ease you of that insufferable monotony.

That is in the respectable parts, however—the West End of the docks, as it were. There are other parts where the monotony is that of squalor. It is terrible to think of human beings living under such conditions; but in truth the whole country is pestilential. During a hot summer the smells that come from the river, and those that the sun draws up from the unwholesome marsh in which all that succession of towns is built, are enough to poison the inhabitants. The country is all reeking damp. People who can ill afford it have to keep fires frequently burning all over their houses if they would even keep the paper on the walls. Keen, biting winds sweep across the country in winter, but in summer you sigh in vain for a breath of sweet air; and, as if the inevitable smells were not as much as human lungs and noses could endure, chemical works have been started there, the fumes from which have killed all vegetation within a radius of half a mile from them.

In such a country as this children dwindle and die, and even strong men droop and fail. It is far away from authority; there are no wealthy people to be annoyed by the smells; nobody, therefore, to check nuisances that would not be tolerated for a month in richer districts.

When we arrived at the river, however, all previous smells seemed to be as nothing. The tide was low, and it was difficult to tell where the oily black ripples ended, and the oily black mud began. The evening was intensely hot, and the smell

that came from the foul stream as the paddles of passing steamers churned it up was simply nauseating. And yet as we crossed the river we saw boys bathing in this black ooze, laughing, and playing, and splashing it about over each other.

Another visit I paid to the docks was in a larger company. A special train was drawn up in Liverpool Street Station to convey the passengers of the good ship Adriatic and their friends to Tilbury, from which a tender was to take them on board. The train was about thirty carriages long.

The platform was crammed with passengers and their friends, and groups of curiously diverse nature were constantly forming and passing each other. There was a very smart young man with very shiny boots and a very shiny hat, attended by a party of friends who also had shiny boots and still shinier hats. Each of them had a cigar, and their tone and accent as they talked corresponded sufficiently well with their dress. Getting into the next carriage was a party of nuns. In the distance was a tall, graceful girl, carrying a basket of flowers and ferns, as graceful as herself. She was looking about for someone, and making enquiries of guards and porters. Presently she saw the nuns, and swimming up to them gave one of them this pretty but rather cumbersome farewell present. In another carriage was a sad-eyed woman, and three young girls who were evidently to be left behind. The children were not beautiful, it must be confessed, but there was a terrible pathos in the mother's hungry looks.

At last we were all stowed away, and, leaving the station, crawled through a most desolate country—a land of utter squalor. Through stations with unknown names the long train slowly wound its way, till sheds, and masts of ships, and eventually the picturesque hotel on the edge of the marsh that I remembered of old, made their appearance. Instead of our having to go down to Tilbury, we found that the ship was still in the docks, lying within a hundred yards of the place where the train stopped.

The long train disgorged its freight of passengers, who streamed in a long line through the adjacent shed to the quay, and from that over the "brow" to the vessel, and down into the saloon. Then began the usual hunt for cabins; the confusion from passengers having taken possession of the wrong cabin, and the difficulty

of convincing them of their mistake ; the enquiries as to when the vessel would start ; when the train would return to town ; how much time there was to say "good-bye" in ; all of which the officers, stewards, and stewardesses of the ship answered with the most perfect good-nature over and over again.

Then on deck a gang of swarthy Lascars—lithe and graceful of movement—began laying out a cable, the leading hand blowing every two or three minutes on a silver whistle elaborate flourishes of which, as far as I could see, nobody took any notice whatever. The officers threaded their way through the crowd of passengers, looked over the side, gave orders to the Lascars, and so the work of unmooring went on, while the last leave-takings were being transacted.

Down below things had got a little sorted, people had found their cabins, and had deposited their hand-luggage in them. The young man and his friends with the shiny boots had discovered the bar, and were having a farewell bottle of "fiz" there. The nuns had taken leave of their party, and had gone on deck to receive and return last salutations between the quay and the ship, making a curious picture as they stood there, those quiet, sweet-faced women in the dress of centuries ago, on the deck of a steamer, with a background of masts, and steam-crane, and puffing tugs, and a foreground of screeching locomotives.

The pale-faced mother, having found her cabin, had taken her children in there for the final parting, and we saw her no more. The little ones presently came out, hanging on to the hands of an old man who accompanied them, and weeping as if their hearts would break.

"How much time have we got before the ship starts?" I heard someone asking of a ship's officer, shouting to make himself heard above the bellowing of the steam siren that was disgorging white vapour and sound.

"Only another minute or two," the officer shouted back.

"I suppose they will give us notice when we are to go ashore," said the questioner.

"They've been giving you notice ever since you've been aboard," replied the mariner with a grin, pointing in the direction from which the hideous bellowing yell reached us from out of the mist. And, indeed, this most unpleasant sound had

made verbal communication difficult all the time we had been on deck.

Presently the visitors left the ship and assembled on the quay.

A young officer ran along the margin of the quay, shouted a few directions to the men on deck, and went on board again. Then the "brow" was swung ashore ; the ship began in some mysterious manner to move away from the quay ; a couple of grimy, snorting tugs took possession of her, and she was dragged, stern foremost, towards the dock-gate ; the inevitable nigger sitting astride the spanker-boom and holding the flag in his extended hand, while he gazed upon the world around him with an impassive air, as if he thought that the people who didn't sit astride spanker-booms, displaying a small flag, were of little moment.

Gradually we saw the ship bearing this strange and motley collection of travellers, nuns, traders, soldiers, priests, sailors, Lascars, vanishing from our sight. We waved them a last farewell from the quay, this crowd of people the steamer had disgorged, who had never met before, and would probably never meet again, joining—many of them with flushed faces and tearful eyes—in a pantomimic "Good-bye"; and then we turned and got into the waiting train, and in another minute were discussing the morning's news.

A quarter of an hour afterwards we were back in the crowded, bustling London streets, and the scene we had just witnessed seemed like a strange and unreal vision.

#### THE THUGS.

IN the year 1807 a band of Indian rascals was accidentally detected in the act of dividing what turned out to be the clothes and other property of some murdered travellers, and by laboriously following this clue, that great mystery of iniquity—Thuggee—was eventually dragged into the light.

Some years later, Dr. Sherwood, an old resident in India, published a pamphlet about the Thugs which sent a thrill of horror both through the Anglo-Indian and the British public. According to him the sect seems to have originated ages ago in the north of India, where its members were called Thugs, or Deceivers, and thence spread south under the name of Phansigars or Stranglers.

Thuggee was not only a profession, but a religion as well, and so close and secret were its principles that little was really known of it even among the natives themselves. To speak of the Thugs, or even to think of them, was held to be unlucky. No good could, and much harm might, come of it.

From different Thugs, who, when arrested, turned informers to escape capital punishment, was obtained the following account of the origin of the mysterious brotherhood.

Cœval with the creation of mankind existed a huge giant, who was so big that when he took a walk in the sea his head rose above the deepest waves, and the highest mountains were but as ant-hills in his path. A good-sized river could have run down his throat, dashing itself against his rocks of teeth, and his roar resounded from one end of the earth to the other. As for the loftiest and strongest forests, he crushed through them like grass. He lived on human flesh, and his appetite was so voracious that man would soon have been exterminated, but for the merciful interposition of the goddess Davee, who, having obtained a sword of enormous size, attacked the giant, and at the very first thrust ran him through. He fell dead before her, but from his blood, which ran in rivers—here we seem to have an Indian version of Hercules and the Hydra—sprang legions of new giants as formidable as the first. The goddess, wielding her gigantic sword like a beam of light, slew and slew, but each monster as he fell gave birth with his blood to a thousand more, and the task was interminable.

Feeling herself almost done, Davee stopped to wipe her face, and from her perspiration as it fell upon the ground sprang two men—and then she saw the way out of it. Tearing a piece from her robe, she divided it into two handkerchiefs, which she gave to her sons, and showed them how to tie the slip-knot. Under Davee's instructions they went boldly to work, and being now able to kill without shedding blood, soon strangled all the giants.

Their occupation being gone, the two men felt dull for want of employment, and besides, their cherished handkerchiefs were useless, as Indian necks and noses required neither to be muffed nor blown; so they poured out their grief in prayer to Davee, who took pity and gave them leave to strangle their fellow-creatures, and make

at the same time a livelihood out of the plunder of the victims, not forgetting their dues to Davee. So these two men became the founders of the sect of Thugs.

The good Davee showed in many other ways her consideration for her children. Whilst they were few in numbers, and the work hard, she buried all the dead herself. They only had to strangle and hide the bodies in the bushes, and by morning at latest they were sure to be gone. Perhaps jackals had as much to do with this as Davee.

But when there were many Thugs, and they could not all be stranglers, the goddess instituted the order of grave-diggers, and gave up conducting funerals herself.

However, she did them one more good turn, by giving them one of her own ribs for a pickaxe. Other Thugs said that Davee was angry because a strangler, having despatched his man, hid to see how she would bury him, which the goddess had expressly forbidden. To his surprise, instead of burying the corpse, she began to eat it, which was nearly as bad as the giant. As the Thug peeped through the bushes Davee saw him, and with a gesture of rage flew away, and has never been seen since. So the Thugs had to dig graves themselves.

But all agreed that there was no mistake about the rib, which served as a pickaxe for centuries, until, in anger probably at the falling away of the sect from the ancient purity of the faith, it miraculously disappeared.

The profession of Thuggee was kept strictly in the Thug families, descending from father to son. If a stranger wished to enter, he had to get some holy old Thug to agree to become his gooroo, or spiritual parent. After years of apprenticeship, and having passed creditably through the inferior offices of scout, gravedigger, and holder of hands or shamshea, he was fit to climb to the top of the professional tree as a bhurtoe or strangler.

Having been ordered to purify himself by prayer and fasting, and to have as much silver money about him as possible—the chink and smell of silver being particularly grateful to Davee—the candidate and his gooroo, with a shamshea, started off disguised as ordinary travellers.

If possible, they joined company with some solitary, poor wayfarer, and waited patiently for the time when, after the mid-day meal, he lay down to sleep in the shade; but, before proceeding to actual

business, it was necessary to withdraw and watch for a good omen.

If it came shortly, they turned their faces westward; and the gooroo, taking the handkerchief, tied at one end the goor khat or holy knot, with a rupee inside it. He then delivered it to the disciple, who, leaving the gooroo to pray to Davee, crept stealthily with the shamshea to the unconscious slumberer, whom they awoke. Then in an instant his hands were pinioned, the fatal noose passed round his neck; then came a stifled cry, a choking gurgle, a convulsive struggle, and the sleep of the grave settled on his eyes for ever!

The work being done, the murderers, leaving the corpse to the grave-diggers, who were not far off, returned to their friends, to whom the gooroo presented his son in triumph as a full-blown bhurtote or strangler. He then took back his own rupee, as well as getting all his son's money, for the purchase of what was wanted for the solemn feast, to which all friends were invited, and the chief dainty at which was the dish of goor or holy sugar.

A sleeper, said the Thug informers, was always accused before being strangled, because their religion expressly forbade the killing of one who slept.

The reason of this probably was a fear lest an attempt to slip the noose round the neck of a person lying down might be a failure, and result in an alarm and detection.

"Never to be found out" was a cardinal doctrine of the Thug creed, and so skilfully and craftily were their plans invariably laid that such a thing as a failure was, the Thugs averred, never known. It was, in fact, impossible that a pious Thug whose heart was right towards Davee and his gooroo should fail. The goddess would not let him.

A Thug who was once another's gooroo was his gooroo always; the tie between them was the closest and holiest on earth. A man might strangle his father, or even his wife, and yet remain a respectable Thug, but such a monster as one wicked or undutiful towards hisgooroo had never been heard of.

To the extreme and serpent-like caution of the Thugs was due, no doubt, the fact that though they had flourished in India from time immemorial, neither the Government nor the European community had the slightest notion of their existence.

The Thugs thought very much of signs and omens, the due observation and in-

terpretation of which formed an important part of the mystery of their craft. Without a favourable omen no expedition was ever undertaken.

September, December, and July were unlucky months, and Wednesdays and Thursdays unlucky days on which to set out. To hear cries of mourners for the dead, or to see a hare on the left, or to meet a woman carrying water, or one about to become a mother—these were all good omens. One of the best was to hear an ass bray on the left, and then another on the right, for this meant strangling many people, and both hands full of money.

The Lodaha and Jumaldehee Thugs kicked the back of the first "piece of business," on the same principle that a London crossing-sweeper spits for luck on the first copper he gets in the day. But if at the beginning of an expedition, the jemadar, or leader, happened to drop the sacred waterpot, which he carried along with the holy pickaxe, wrapped in a white cloth, with roots of turmeric and coins, it was an exceedingly bad omen for all concerned. So it was to meet a potter or a blind man, or a funeral, or a dancing-master, or a seller of oil. A woman with an empty pitcher was bad. Two jackals were worse.

It was bad, too, to sneeze—which is what the modern Italians say. But the very worst sign of all was to hear the cry of a hare on the right at night. This, a Thug informer said, meant a special warning from Davee that the expedition should be abandoned, for, if persisted in, it would end in disaster and death, and the hares would lap water out of their skulls.

After Davee took away her rib, they had to use iron pickaxes, and the making of one was an important religious ceremony. The time and omens being all right, prayers and fastings were made, and then the blacksmith and a Thug priest were shut up alone together till the job was finished. Here we seem to have the root of an old tradition among smiths that none but the initiated should witness the forging of a masterpiece.

When the pickaxe was made, great precautions were taken that no shadow might fall on it before it had been consecrated, and render it useless.

To consecrate it, they first buried it, and then dug it up and put it into a brass box; then it was taken out and washed in holy sugar-and-water, in milk, and in rice-spirit. Seven crimson spots were then put on it. Lastly, a fire was

made of mango-staves, and the pickaxe placed in a dish with cocoanuts and spices. Then it was passed seven times through the flame, and the rite was complete. It only remained to ascertain the goodwill of the goddess, for which the chief priest put a cocoanut on the ground, and taking the pickaxe in his hand, loudly called on Davee, and then struck the cocoanut.

If he broke it, it was a good omen, and all present bowed towards the west; if he failed, it was bad, and no more could be done for that time.

The pickaxe was a fetish, or holy thing. When buried in the earth, it would turn and point in the direction an expedition ought to take. An oath sworn on it was inviolable. If any man failed to keep it, a Thug told Captain Sleeman, Davee would twist his neck round and round till he died.

This Captain Sleeman was an Indian magistrate who was very active in discovering and rooting out Thugs. His reports to Government, between 1830 and 1835, are, in spite of their horrible disclosures, highly interesting. He also compiled a vocabulary of Thuggee. All his information was obtained from Thug approvers, some of them persons of superior intelligence and polished manners.

In winter, Thugs pretended to follow different occupations, and in summer set out on their strangling expeditions. Sometimes they travelled in small parties, at other times in bands of a hundred, or even two hundred strong. If a solitary passenger was overtaken, his fate was sealed. Several Thugs would creep up behind him, seize his arms and legs, twist the handkerchief round his neck, and throw him to the ground a corpse.

They often disguised themselves as merchants, artisans, soldiers, and pilgrims.

Their scouts, going on in advance, entered the towns, and learned what travellers were on the road, their numbers, apparent wealth, and whether armed or otherwise. With them the Thugs would mingle like harmless wayfarers; gradually, and without exciting suspicion, each traveller would be placed between a sham-shea and a bhurtote, who, at a given signal, would seize upon the victim and draw tight the deadly noose. Not unfrequently, a company of thirty or forty persons, men, women, and children, who had banded together for mutual safety, has been thus in a few minutes destroyed.

In burying the dead, the Thugs first broke all the joints, and then ripped open

the bodies, lest these, by swelling, should crack the earth above, and be scented out by the jackals. If possible, they dug the graves in the jungle, but, if the ground was open, they would encamp and light fires to dry the damp, freshly-turned earth. Nothing was ever left to chance. The travellers' graves were often dug beforehand in some lonely jungle near which they had to pass.

There was no instance on record of Thugs having been seen at their work. If any ever did so see them, they shared undoubtedly the common fate.

It was the first article of their creed to shed no blood; the swift, silent noose alone did the work. Another rule was, never to kill anyone near his home.

Besides the land Thugs, there were the Pungoos, or water Thugs, who plied their trade in boats on the rivers, pretending to convey passengers—generally pilgrims—or to take up tired wayfarers out of mere charity. At night they would arise and strangle them, and throw their bodies overboard to be devoured by the crocodiles.

There seems to be something peculiarly malignant and devilish in this waking people up to be strangled. In the house, they would shake the sleeper, and shout in his ear that a scorpion—or, if it were out of doors, that a snake—had crept into his clothes: any sudden, fearful alarm, to terrify and confuse him; and the next instant he was gasping for the breath of his life, and the next was a corpse.

A chief Thug was once asked if he never felt remorse for his deeds. "Does anyone," he replied, "feel remorse for having worked at the calling which God has assigned to him? It is, in reality, God who kills all, and no one dies before his time."

Another said that the taste of the goor or holy sugar changed man's nature—it would change a beast. This man had left Thuggee and got on well in the world, but he could not forget the taste of the goor, and returned to be a Thug.

Many Thugs, especially one Zolfukar, a chief leader among them, ascribed the evils which had overtaken the sect to impiety, to the neglect of Davee, and to the killing of women, a thing never done by the ancient Thugs.

"Ah," he said, "once we had religion, now we have lost it, and must suffer the penalty of our sins. But Davee never forsook us till we forsook her."

Another kind of Thugs selected their victims from the poor, murdering them for

the sake of their children, whom they afterwards sold, especially beautiful girls, for good prices in the large cities. The two centres of their operations were Delhi and Bhurtapore. Besides Davee, they had a prophet Megpunna, who had been a hermit of extraordinary sanctity, and a great worker of miracles.

A notorious Thug chief was Feringhea, who was arrested at Sangir in 1830. This most atrocious scoundrel confessed to so many murders that his statements were in a great measure disbelieved, especially with regard to the strangling of three parties of travellers by himself and his comrades some years before. At his request the ground at three different spots which he carefully pointed out was dug up. It was then covered with grass and bushes of old growth, but on reaching a certain depth the skeletons were found just as Feringhea had said.

At the beginning of the present century there were supposed to be ten thousand Thugs in all India, who annually murdered thirty thousand people. Between the years 1826 and 1837, more than nineteen hundred were hanged or imprisoned in Bombay, Madras, and Bengal. Thuggee is considered, then, to have received its death-blow, and to have become within ten years afterwards quite extinct.

But ancient customs die hard in the East, and it is not impossible that in the remote parts of India, especially in the native principalities, it may linger even yet.

Of the thousands of persons who disappear annually in India, there are many of whom their friends only know that they were and are not. Wild beasts they suppose have destroyed them; but it may be that on some lonely road they have encountered a savage more crafty and relentless than even the man-eater or hooded snake.

#### RUSSET AND GREEN.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

MENTION was made, at an early stage of this veracious chronicle, of Mr. Samuel Bunch, a gentleman of artistic tastes, who occupied Mrs. Perks's first-floor, and was by her consulted as to the presentation to Miss Kennett of the Rev. John. Miss Kennett came to see a good deal of Mr. Bunch, in one way or another — more, indeed, than she ever saw of the other lodgers with whom the house was packed, collectively. She passed him on the stairs,

or in the street, in the near neighbourhood of the house, pretty nearly every morning, as she betook herself to her daily interview with Mrs. Travers; and it was rarely the case that she got back to her own room, when her day's labour was over, without seeing him a second time. This circumstance, to one a little more sophisticated in the ways of town life in general, and of such quarters as William Street in particular, than was Miss Kennett, would certainly have aroused suspicion. And when the suspecter is a young lady of considerable personal attractions, and the suspected a young man of artistic pursuits, and, therefore, with a faculty for the admiration of the beautiful, the character of the suspicion is not far to seek. But it never entered Miss Kennett's mind to conceive that it was by any other cause than accident that Mr. Bunch found so many opportunities of momentarily relieving his head of the weight of the soiled white deer-stalker which so constantly decorated it. For Mr. Bunch shared his landlady's faculty of knowing a lady when he saw one, and the "coup de chapeau" with which he never failed to greet her was beautiful to see. It spoke a respectful, artistic admiration, a recognition of social superiority, while the familiar jerk of the head and encouraging smile which always accompanied the action, softened its more dignified attributes. About this time, too, Mr. Bunch began to pay more attention to his person than it had hitherto been his habit to do, and to indulge in such cheap sartorial splendours as were within the purchasing power of his meagre purse. He sported a tie of a beautiful arsenical green, and had his boots blacked twice a week. These outward and visible signs of moral perturbation would not have been lost upon any native damsel of Paradise Street as they were upon Miss Kennett; but the sad little smile and bow which Mr. Bunch's magnificent salute received as its sole answer was all the recognition it and his new-born splendours of costume received.

"It can't be the parson," said Mr. Bunch to himself. "He ain't been round here for a fortnight." Mr. Bunch was perplexed. It did not accord with his scheme of things that so much beauty should walk the world unclaimed and unprotected. "And there's nobody in that 'ouse in Beatrice Place but two old women. Old women! Yah!—what's she want to waste her time like that for?"

Mr. Bunch was wroth at this inexplic-

able folly. At first the little smile with which Miss Kennett had replied to his salute had comforted and encouraged him, but were things to stop at that pass for ever? Surely any young lady, unhampered by a prior attachment, must have read the meaning of his smiles—must have known better than to fancy that a man with work to do had no object in thus persistently throwing himself in her way. Mr. Bunch was quite willing to allow that advances should first be made from his side, but he sorely felt the need of a little encouragement.

There were ways and means, he argued with himself, by which the most modest of young women could express her willingness to "keep company" with a young man whose desires that way were evident as were his own. For Bunch was a bit of a Don Juan in the eyes of Paradise Street, and had had many innocently amorous experiences of the ladies of that quarter; and he contrasted Miss Kennett's bearing with those of his former flames, finding no encouragement in the comparison. Had not Miss Price, the comely barmaid at The Wellington, now the proud bride of an opulent young stockbroker, mingling with the titled of the land at her husband's mansion at Tulse Hill—had not she, the circumspectness of whose conduct might be upheld as an example to all possible barmaids, entrusted Mr. Bunch with letters to post for her, and rewarded his attachment with other small commissions expressing recognition of and confidence in his as yet unspoken affection? Had not Miss Turner, the greengrocer's daughter (a less shining example, certainly, for she had only married the baker at the corner, but yet a most discreet young woman), entrusted to him the quelling of a distasteful suitor from the neighbouring barracks, and, on one blissful occasion, sent him a valentine? Miss Kennett gave him no letters to post, no commissions to execute, no despised or unwelcome follower to vanquish, and had sent him no valentine. He had received but that sad little smile and bow in recognition of all his labour and expense, the time wasted at the street-corner, waiting for her morning and evening, the boot-polish, and the beautiful cravat. Did she think cravate cost nothing, and that boot-blacks dispensed Day and Martin and elbow-grease gratis? And if a lady wouldn't give a cove the tip, what was he to do? Mr. Bunch, driven to extremity, cleaned his nails and mounted false cuffs and a homicidal collar, and still the fair one was coy.

Mary Kennett went her own quiet way, unwitting of all this, and so untroubled by it. The days slipped by, almost unmarked in their monotonous likeness one to another. The salary she received from Mrs. Travers for her daily attendance upon her, small as it was, was still more than enough for her exceedingly simple needs, and, with all sordid care for the future, some little of her habitual melancholy had passed away, and left her with a settled content which was almost cheerful—which was, at all events, as far removed from sadness as from gaiety. She made no new acquaintances, and apparently desired none, living her life of barren routine from day to day. What thoughts of a brighter and more useful existence, experienced or imagined, she may have had, remained unexpressed. To whom, indeed, might she have confided them? Mrs. Travers—sitting in stony resignation by her dismantled hearth, waiting the wished-for end, dreaming again the hopes and disappointments, joys and sorrows, of a life which to Mary was but one of the million of sealed mysterious histories which go to make up London—gave no confidences and asked none. She was kind, with that cold kindness which her age and life of solitary, troubled thought permitted. She spoke of resignation, never of hope, except it were in the life to come; of prayer, of patience, never of love, of joy, of a happy future upon that world which had fallen away from her and left her there, a ghost of flesh and blood, with but the spectres of her own troubled past to bear her company while still she bore the burden of the flesh. That Mary should be pale and quiet, that, with all the wealth of hope, and love, and joy in expectation which belong to youth, she should yet be companionless and unloved, were to her things which asked for pity and tenderness, but which seemed to her stern thought no subject of surprise or wonder. Trouble was the lot of all, and all that young or old might do was to bend in resignation to the burden, and pray for strength to bear it to the end. So confidence between her and Mary was impossible, and of all her meagre present acquaintance there remained only the Rev. John, a clergyman, certainly, and, according to Mary's views, a most admirable one, but one in whom, from his age and the shortness of their knowledge of each other, she shrank from confiding to too great an extent. And, for his part, he asked no confidences, and, in fact, tacitly avoided

them, preferring to offer what practical kindness lay in his power to prying, in his quality of spiritual adviser, into misfortunes which he would probably have been totally unable to relieve. Such services as he could render once performed, he left the girl to her own devices, leaving with her the knowledge that in all contingencies in which a man's hand or head could be of any avail to her, she had but to call him to her side.

It befell upon a certain summer evening that a somewhat singular event came to pass, which, slight in itself, was yet a link in the tangled chain which I have made it my task to unravel. Mary had passed the day—as she had passed many previously—in that bare room in the house in Beatrice Place. It was warm summer weather now, but the fire still burned sullenly beneath its hood of grey ashes, and the bent figure before it still bore the heavy envelope of shawls and wraps which it had worn on the day when Mary had first beheld it. Everything was unchanged; the swift foot of Time, which left such deep imprints elsewhere, seemed here to have disarranged no speck of dust upon the floor, to have shaken not so much as a cobweb in the empty and neglected corners. The dreamy atmosphere of the place, in which all seemed strange, weird, and unreal, was unchanged, and for hours the only sound which had varied the monotonous ticking of the clock had been Mary's voice as she read from the heavy Bible to that silent and unlistening figure on the hearth. It was close upon four o'clock, and her daily task was nearly done, when suddenly she was startled by a cry, and, rising quickly from her seat, beheld Mrs. Travers standing erect with outstretched hands, and eyes fixed with a wild stare on empty space.

"Roland!"

There was no mistaking the word, and the voice and accent with which it was spoken were those of agony and shame. And while the girl stood looking at her, frozen with fear beyond the power of speech or action, Mrs. Travers fell back heavily into her seat, and turning her face towards her companion, spoke again:

"A jealous God, visiting the sins of the children upon the fathers."

The face and voice with which she spoke that travesty of the sacred words were terrible to see and hear. There was a long pause before she spoke again, and then her voice had regained its own changeless accent, monotonous and hollow.

"Go," she said; "leave me to myself. If I have said anything you could not understand, forget it. Go now, and come again to-morrow."

#### CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Mary arrived that evening before the door of Number Eighty-nine, Paradise Street, she discovered Mr. Bunch there before her, in the act of admitting himself with a latchkey. The artist's appearance, since she had last beheld him that morning on leaving the house—he had been posted, as usual, at the corner of the street, and had bestowed upon her the invariable salute, with the invariable result—had undergone a marked improvement. He had on a new and complete suit of tweed, obviously, from the obstinate creases which decorated the legs and arms, of the "reach-me-down" variety, but better fitting, and of a quieter cut and pattern than the vestments he had hitherto patronised; and he had a new tall hat, white, with a broad black band, perched, like the predecessor it had replaced, at the extreme back of his head; and he carried an unframed picture enveloped in brown-paper under his arm. His expression did not betray that satisfaction which his newly-found sartorial grandeur might have justified one in expecting, but was at once disdainful and aggressive, and he carried the short wooden pipe, which decorated his countenance, upside down at an angle which imitated the elevation of his nose, and expressed scorn and contumely. Beholding Miss Kennett, he left the door open behind him, and preceded her upstairs as far as the first landing, where he turned and addressed her.

"I say," he demanded, with no preface or exordium, "do you know anything about pictures?"

Mary responded cautiously that she had seen a good many.

"Do you know a good one when you see it?" he asked. "Because if you do, now's your time, so don't neglect it, or you'll never know what you've missed. Come along in here."

He kicked open a room door, and entered, Mary following. The room was carpetless and unfurnished, save for a miraculously small bed in one corner, a washhand-stand in imitation maple, two chairs, a rickety deal table with red legs, a rheumatic easel; and two fly-blown silhouettes of somebody's deceased relations hung upon the wall. There was a

sickly scent of paints and varnishes in the air, and the windows were less clean than they might have been. The young man planted one of the chairs at an angle with the light with a quite unnecessary amount of noisy energy, and having freed the picture he carried from its envelope of brown-paper, placed it on the chair, and demanded :

"There! what do you think of that?"

It was a picture of somewhat peculiar character. It represented a table spread with a green cloth, upon which was set a plate of green earthenware, and on that were piled green apples, green filberts, green pears, and a green lettuce, which gave the too-sensitive beholder colic, tooth-ache, and goose-skin to look upon. They looked about as eatable as tin, and their tints had apparently been studied from variations of the colour of Mr. Bunch's necktie. The artist had a right to claim distinction on one score. He had invested common objects with colours quite unknown to nature. The picture had one good point, however. Its drawing was laborious and a little hard, but careful and accurate.

"There!" repeated the young man approvingly; "what do you think of that?"

Mary did so much violence to her conscience as to say that she thought it was very nice.

"Then," demanded Mr. Bunch, with even greater irritation than he had yet evinced, "why the deuce don't they buy it?"

The query was of such a character that Mary could only look hopelessly at its propounder, and could find no answer. It was the first opportunity she had yet had of observing him closely. He was the type of that kind of man of which, in Charles Reade's fine phrase, crowds are made. His features were commonplace, and somewhat harsh, but the eyes and chin were good and resolute. His figure was stunted and ungraceful, but broad and straggling as to build.

"I've carted that picture about for three months," he went on. "There ain't a dealer in London as don't know it. I've sent it to every gallery and exhibition I could hear of, and they've all chucked it. My uncle offers five-and-six on it. Five-and-six! My eye! Why, I put three weeks' good work into it, five hours a day, and the frame cost fifteen bob. I got eight on that," he added, with a gleam of happier remembrance, which went as rapidly as it came. "What do they mean

by it? Talk about your Turnerses and your Millaises! Look at that bit o' colour there. Did you ever see a green like that in a Millais, I should like to know?"

Mary replied, truthfully, that she never had.

"You never will," replied the artist, not at all soothed by her ready admission. "There ain't one of the lot of 'em as knows anything about colour. It's enough to make a man turn atheist to see how he's treated in this world." He spoke as if he had already travelled through several universes, in each of which he had received better treatment than in the present. "A cove might as well not work at all—just as well not—better, in fact. It's just like Oliver Cromwell said: 'Slog away till all's blue, and what do you get for it?'"

This appropriate and authentic quotation seemed to soothe him. He looked at his production with a softened eye, and shook his head with the air of who has hit the right nail fairly for once.

"Never mind, old lady," he continued. Mary thought for a moment that he was still addressing her, but it was the picture. "Never mind! we'll beat 'em yet—hollow as a drum! Let 'em try all they know to keep us down; we're ready for 'em. Pour on, we will endure! Yes, sir! It'll take 'em all their time to beat Sam Bunch, and more. Sam'll get his look in one of these fine days, and then we'll see things. Sam'll roll in his carriage yet, and woffle in the spondoolicks with the best of 'em. Lord! what does a bit of hardupness matter now, to a man as has got a future before him? Nothing at all. It helps him. Opens his eyes, and teaches him his way about. 'Pour être grand, il faut souffrir.'"

The accent was hideous, but the quotation was recognisable, and Mary looked at him in some surprise. He caught the glance, and laughed aloud.

"Didn't think I knew French—eh? Perhaps Sam knows more than he gets credit for. A cove can be a gentleman—and well-educated, too, mind you—for all he lives in Paradise Street, W.C. Or a lady, either!" The complimentary intention was obvious, in spite of grammatical confusion. "Don't you be afraid o' me, miss," continued Mr. Bunch; "there's no harm in me. Only when a gentleman meets a lady, a bit—a bit off colour like," he insinuated this with great delicacy, "when he's a bit off colour himself—why, they should be neighbourly, shouldn't they?"

Mary assented, wondering what was

coming next. Mr. Bunch was beginning to be amusing.

"There's many a lady and gentleman met afore now, in Queer Street—hard-up, I mean, miss, you know—as have got on wonderful well together, as—as have lived to be proud of each other afterwards. Why, there was Flaxman—though he was only a sculptor, of course—met his wife when they was both so hard up as they could hardly feed 'emselves; and see what a couple they was!"

Mr. Bunch was progressing at such a rate now, that he was fast ceasing to be amusing, and getting rather terrifying. Mary owned not only a tender heart, but, a rarer quality in women, a sense of humour. The latter gift had had few opportunities of cultivation or display lately, but it existed, and it and the desire to stay Mr. Bunch from his evident intention as kindly and with as little unnecessary cruelty as possible, played, between them, sad havoc with her feelings.

"There is another picture here," she said, turning to the easel. "May I look at it?"

"I'd rather you didn't," answered Bunch rapidly, with a restraining hand upon the cloth which covered it. "It's a hospital subject."

"A what?" asked Mary.

"A hospital subject," repeated Mr. Bunch. "When they get an interesting case, anything peculiar, they like to have it painted. One of the surgeons at St. Thomas's is a pal of mine, and he's given me a job or two in that way. Took one 'ome this morning. Two pun ten I got for it. Bought these clothes with some of it. Treat—eh? Nobby? What do you think I give for 'em, now? You'd never guess. Twenty-five bob for the lot, hat and all, and six and a kick for the boots." He was really a surprisingly vulgar young man. "Lor' bless you, a chap as knows the ropes can dress like a toff for next to nothing. And I'm a steady chap, too. No larks—never drink. Always at work. Why, though I say it, there's heaps o' gals as'd jump at me."

"Mr. Bunch," said Mary with creditable gravity, "I'm afraid you are approaching a subject on which we shall not agree." Mr. Bunch took off the tall white hat and scrutinised its lining with intent interest. "Neighbours should avoid disagreement if possible, if they wish to remain good friends."

"Well," said Mr. Bunch, not by any means with all his old fluency, "I—I don't mean, as a man may say—immediate. I don't expect that. How could I? Of course we should keep company a bit first, so as to see a bit more of each other. Because—well, I might be mistaken, and you might not suit, after all."

"I am very much afraid I should not suit," replied Miss Kennett.

"And, besides," continued Mr. Bunch, "a cove—I mean a gentleman—can't marry on two and fourpence and a latch-key. And then there's furniture. No. It couldn't be done yet. But you might think about it, miss."

"I should seriously advise you not to think about it, Mr. Bunch," said Mary. "Please say no more," for he opened his lips as if to speak. "I hope you will find a girl to suit you—a good girl, who will understand your ambitions and be worthy of the position you will win for her."

"Do you think as I shall knock 'em, some day, then?" demanded the artist eagerly.

"Who knows?" asked Mary, "averaging" the meaning of the unfamiliar phrase. "But you must work."

"Oh, I'll work," responded the artist. "Never you fear that. And there's big prizes in art, mind you. There's men making thousands a year out of it."

"I hope you will become one of them some day," answered Mary quickly. Mr. Bunch's vivid imagination already pictured him to himself as one of the Forty—the President, perhaps; and Mary saw that this golden dream was emboldening him to a second attack. "And now I must say good-afternoon, Mr. Bunch."

"Good-afternoon," returned the artist sorrowfully.

"She's a stunner!" he said to himself, as he sat down upon the little bed and filled the short pipe. "She ain't like the gals hereabout. Wonder if she's a lady—a real lady—a swell. She talks like it, she looks like it. Knows French. What brings a gal as knows French in Paradise Street? I know it, but then I've lived in Soho. She's a lady, I believe. She's hard-up, or else she's—no, she ain't done anything; she's hard-up—that's it. Well, I haven't got my answer yet. One 'no' ain't much to a man as is a man. She'll be Mrs. Bunch yet, some day, or I'll know the reason why."

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